

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

July 13, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Interim Chair Bishop, Commissioners Chirls, Lampe, Marciante, Teh

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioners Woosley, Wu

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Franz Loewenherz, Department of Transportation; Bradley Calvert, Department of Planning and Community Development; Brian Walsh, Washington State Department of Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Commissioner Bishop who presided as Interim Chair.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Woosley and Wu, both of whom were excused.

The Commissioners took a moment to introduce themselves to new Commissioners Marciante and Teh. For their part, Commissioner Teh said he has lived in Bellevue for the past 14 years, is a business owner in the city, and has three children. Commissioner Marciante said she has lived in Bellevue for seven years, has two children, and works for Vulcan in its philanthropic division and also leads the transportation work done by the organization; she said she has a background of construction management for large transportation projects and urban development.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Richard Morris, 13430 SE 24th Street, spoke representing the Sunset Community Association. He said all the new construction in the area has triggered a problem on Kamber Road given the lack of sidewalks along a section of the roadway. He said a plan has been developed working with a transportation engineer. The plan appears to be feasible and he sought the support of the Commission. Resident Carl Lang has only a bicycle lane to walk in to get to the store, but a bicycle lane is not a sidewalk.

Mr. Carl Lang, 1857 140th Place, said he fell five years ago and broke his neck. As a result he has great difficulty in getting up to the store on foot. Where his driveway intersects with Kamber Road there is no sidewalk, only a bicycle lane that is not really even marked as a

bicycle lane. It is really only a two-foot-wide strip of pavement adjacent to the ditch that is unusable to him in his wheelchair. That means he has to cross all three lanes of Kamber Road to get to the sidewalk on the other side. He said he is not the only one who has issues walking along the narrow edge strip, including families with small children. Sidewalk access is needed on both sides of the road. In the meantime, striping to alert drivers to the fact that he is crossing the road would be helpful.

Mr. Mark Brinton, 13630 SE 20th Street, also spoke representing the Sunset Community Association. He said there are many families with children who use the Kamber Road area, and there is a stairway that leads up to the college that is heavily used. Pedestrians must cross the street to access the sidewalk. Kamber Road sees between 9000 and 11,000 cars per day, some of it cut-through traffic. It would be very helpful to have a sidewalk where it is missing.

Mr. Gary Klein, 2205 135th Place SE, said he walks and cycles. He said the bike lane along Kamber Road is adequate for bikes but not as a sidewalk. He encouraged the Commissioners to support retaining the bike lane while adding a sidewalk. Kamber Road has quite a lot of bicycle traffic, in part because it is one of the major routes for the Lake to Lake ride.

Ms. Lisa Lightner, 2840 139th Avenue SE, Unit 17, requested the Commission's assistance in working to urge Amazon not to park their buses on her home owners association property. Amazon's employee bus starts at the end of 139th Avenue SE close to Eastgate Way, but with the park and ride changes at South Bellevue the buses are coming earlier to avoid getting caught in traffic, and the buses are parking on the private road that serves the condominiums where she lives. The road they use leads down to a storm water retention pond, and the condominium association must maintain the road. If the buses keep using it, the roadway may be damaged and the condominium association will have to pay for the repairs. Additionally, the buses sit idling starting at 6:30 a.m., waking some condominium residents. She said she did not know how to approach Amazon about the problem but assumed the city is engaged with the company in some way to allow their buses to pick up employees in the city, and she asked for assistance in finding a different location for the buses.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald said staff would look into the issue.

4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

6. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

A. June 8, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Modern Urban Roundabouts

Principal Transportation Planner Franz Loewenherz introduced Brian Walsh with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and noted that he is co-chair of the National Roundabout Committee for the Transportation Research Board. He said Mr. Walsh has had a direct hand in the design, public involvement and community processes associated with the vast majority of the 300-plus roundabouts in the state. The 2010 Eastgate/I-90 land use/transportation project assessed a number of alternatives before arriving at a preferred alternative. One of the topics vetted at the time involved utilizing roundabouts for the interchanges along the I-90 corridor, including the Eastgate interchange. WSDOT graciously provided the city with VSSIM modeling support which helped in reaching the conclusion that roundabouts are technically feasible to operate at these locations. Accordingly, roundabouts are figured into the final report as an option, particularly for the Eastgate Way/150th Avenue SE, the Eastgate Way/156th Avenue SE and the 150th Avenue SE/SE 37th Street intersections. With the transportation levy funds, work has been done to add additional vehicle capacity to the current configuration, but the Transportation Facilities Plan still references the roundabout option.

One roundabout that materialized following the completion of the 2010 study is the additional roundabout at the Lakemont interchange in response to a high occurrence of crashes at the westbound off-ramp. WSDOT helped construct the facility. Mr. Walsh has worked closely with Bellevue transportation staff and continues to serve as a resource.

Mr. Walsh said he has been a traffic engineer for 30 years. He said WSDOT sees merit in roundabouts as evidenced by the roundabout serving the main entrance to the capitol in Olympia. Every morning a significant flow of traffic comes off of I-5 and fills both lanes of the roundabout. Some 2200 vehicles pass through the roundabout in the morning peak, yet the roundabout operates at LOS B. There are some 35 roundabouts in place in the Olympia/Thurston County area. About the same number of roundabouts exist in Whatcom and Skagit counties. The Tri Cities area has a fair number of them as well. In all, some 330 roundabouts have been built in the state since 1997.

Traffic engineers understand that the weak links in any transportation system are the intersections. Given the broader picture that is focused on multimodal travel, more time needs to be given to thinking about intersections. Roundabouts have come into play in the modern age of traffic engineering because they can balance the issues of slowing vehicles speeds and mixing various travel modes, and because they can process a higher number of cars as well as pedestrians.

Mr. Walsh said context is everything when it comes to designing roundabouts. A roundabout in a rural area serves much different needs than a roundabout at an urban intersection. Roundabouts have the ability within a threshold of volumes to serve left-turns much more efficiently than a traditional intersection. A traditional intersection that facilitates 50 percent left-turns will have a higher overall average delay per vehicle than the same number of left-turns handled by a roundabout configuration.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that in calculating level of service (LOS) standards, vehicle delay plays a very large role. Mr. Walsh agreed but pointed out that over the years he has begun to move away from LOS calculations. While LOS continues to be the traditional method for measuring vehicular delay, there are other factors to consider.

Mr. Walsh said the first modern roundabout in the United States was constructed in a suburb of

Las Vegas. Roundabouts have been around for a very long time, but it was not until the British and Australians concluded that there needed to be rules governing how to use them that the advantages of roundabouts started to become clear. In the United States it was recognized that there needed to be policy in place first, just as there were policies relating to traffic signals. He said he spent a lot of time working through the issues before eventually getting to what is called an intersection control evaluation, which is being championed by the Federal Highway Administration.

WSDOT is also looking at other types of intersections, including continuous flow diverging diamond interchanges. Roundabouts fall into the category of alternative intersection types. Roundabouts are touted for their ability to improve safety. It has been shown that roundabouts located on higher-speed facilities where serious injuries and fatalities have been occurring eliminate the problems. A new roundabout located at the main entrance to Matawa in Grant County has eliminated the problem of cars entering or crossing the highway from the side street and encountering high-speed traffic. On Highway 395 in Deer Park north of Spokane there is a plan in place to put in two roundabouts to begin with and possibly three more with the end result of turning the high-speed highway into a main street for the burgeoning community.

Getting trucks through roundabouts has been and continues to be a challenge. The fact is, however, that even at signalized intersections trucks often must straddle lanes and bump over curbs to make turns. There are great models in use that show how trucks can drive through roundabouts and do so very well.

Mr. Walsh shared with the Commission a case study involving Yelm Highway, which is now a fairly significant suburban arterial through southern Thurston County. The four-lane facility handles about 28,000 vehicles per day. Neighborhood access is to the highway along with some retail. The project to widen the roadway from two lanes to four included roundabouts anchoring each end of the project. One roundabout took the place of a signalized intersection that now has no vehicle delay at all, and overall the vehicle travel times through the entire corridor have improved significantly, and neighborhood residents have no problem getting onto and off of the highway at the neighborhood entrances.

Commissioner Lampe asked if the radii of roundabouts vary very much. Mr. Walsh allowed that they do. He said roundabouts come in all shapes and sizes; they do not have to be circular and they can be various shapes to fit the context. The key elements are their ability to bring cars through on a predictable speed path, and being able to accommodate trucks. Roundabouts can be made to fit into various places by being creative. There are roundabouts in the state that are 220 feet across while there are others that are only 88 feet across.

A second case study shared with the Commission involved the ramp terminals in Union Gap, Yakima County. He explained that the original intersection involved five legs and a large truck stop. The vehicle delay at the intersection could reach as high as three cycle lengths or six minutes. The concept that was developed included a U-turn for trucks coming off the freeway to access the frontage road leading to the truck stop. The roundabout itself serves all five legs. The WSDOT office is close to the project and what used to take five minutes to get from the office to the freeway on-ramp now takes only 45 seconds, even though the roundabout averages about 30,000 vehicles per day. There are arterials in the state that see 45,000 cars per day, and at that level a roundabout may not work as well. Currently, the busiest roundabout in the state is in the Tri Cities and it has about 35,000 cars per day entering it.

There is a roundabout in Florida that replaced a signalized intersection that used to see 33,000 vehicles per hour getting onto an island. The volume is such that they metering is required to avoid overwhelming the roundabout. The result is that the facility now accommodates up to 56,000 vehicles per hour onto the island, plus about 1000 pedestrians per day.

Commissioner Teh asked if there are any downsides or tradeoff considerations associated with roundabouts. Mr. Walsh said there is a multi-lane crash history that has been showing up at particular roundabouts. The facility in the Tri Cities that serves 35,000 cars per day had one quadrant that was racking up about 60 crashes per year, most of which were minor and only a couple of which included injuries; it had no fatal crashes. To solve the accident rate, the two lanes were reverted to a single lane entering and the number of crashes fell to only eight in 2016. The result is a longer queue and a higher vehicle delay.

Mr. Loewenherz said the principle of wide node narrow road involves less turn lanes but far more sustainability in the form of planted medians and other gateway features. That was an important consideration in Eastgate according to that community.

Commissioner Bishop commented that roundabouts work very well during peak hours, but even better during off-peak hours. No one has to stop in roundabouts, whereas signalized intersections require some vehicles to stop 24 hours per day.

Commissioner Marciante asked how increased traffic volumes are addressed once a roundabout reaches its capacity. Mr. Walsh said it is being discovered that growth rates applied to corridors do not always play out as projected. Over time, traffic redistribution occurs for various reasons, including because businesses move or change. Planning for the ramp terminals roundabout in Union Gap could have anticipated more retail uses in the area, which could have meant forgoing the roundabout and going instead to a widened arterial with signals. To date, the development anticipated for the area has not followed the projections. It is always necessary to apply some judgment to the growth models. Traffic volumes can and do increase over time. The large-volume roundabout in the Tri Cities which saw its volume reduced in order to reduce the number of accidents now has a much longer queue, which many could perceive as a failure. One option would be to meter the dominant flow that is creating the queue, namely the off-ramp. Bellevue's first roundabout, which was on West Lake Sammamish Parkway, had to be metered the day it was built. Such tweaks can be made to roundabouts to accommodate increased traffic volumes over time.

Commissioner Chirls asked for an example of a roundabout designed to accommodate multimodal travel. Mr. Walsh said the roundabout at the main entrance to the capitol in Olympia is a good example. He noted that pedestrians both singly and in groups use the roundabout. The roundabout is fitted with rectangular rapidly flashing beacons to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycle riders. Commissioner Chirls said he has seen more accidents involving bikes and pedestrians than bikes and cars. He said having pedestrians and bikes share space is not always the best approach, adding that most bicycle accidents involve bikes hitting other bikes.

Commissioner Marciante asked how well autonomous vehicles maneuver roundabouts. Mr. Walsh said he has a subcommittee focused on autonomous vehicles. In Michigan there is a roundabout located on a test track on which autonomous vehicles will be tested. Tesla has been working on the roundabout issue as well and seems to have made good progress.

Mr. Walsh informed the Commission that Thurston County has installed a roundabout on the

Chehalis Western trail, a 27-mile trail that runs from Roy, Washington, to Puget Sound at Henderson Inlet. The trail intersects the Woodland trail where the initial thinking was that regular stop signs would be utilized, but given the grade many were concerned about safety. A roundabout was created instead that has proved to be very effective. It also serves as a nice focal point.

Commissioner Lampe said he assumed that it takes a certain intersection size before a roundabout can even be considered. Mr. Walsh said in any city there are likely to be intersections with cross sections in the 80-foot range. Equally important is the context, whether the intersection serves a residential or collector function. It is true that roundabouts require a certain amount of land, but they can be designed in a variety of shapes and sizes.

Commissioner Chirls asked about the cost tradeoffs between the construction costs of a roundabout and the installation and operational costs of signals at an intersection. Mr. Walsh said signalized intersections cost only about 40 to 50 percent of what it costs to build a roundabout. Signalized intersections do require ongoing maintenance over their entire lifespan. Roundabouts improve traffic flow and reduce accident fatalities, which are not typical cost factors.

B. Grand Connection Framework Plan

Mr. McDonald noted that the Wilburton Commercial Area CAC work and the Grand Connection project are happening concurrently, and Community Development Program Manager Bradley Calvert is project manager for both.

Mr. Calvert explained that Sequence 1 is the first phase of the visioning process and it addresses the segment of the Grand Connection between Meydenbauer Bay and the Civic Center district. The main goal of the Grand Connection is to enhance the pedestrian and bicyclist experience through the downtown by improving safety, connectivity, mobility and the overall experience from an urban design perspective. It is intended to be a unique and signature experience for people in the city, something that is recognizably identifiable as being Bellevue. The project is also looking to improve public spaces to yield new opportunities for programming, whether that be temporary installations or permanent homes for things like the farmers market. There is also the element of crossing I-405 to connect the downtown and Wilburton neighborhoods. The project has been identified as a Council priority.

Sequence 1 is really about the existing infrastructure from Meydenbauer Bay to City Hall. It will not bring online a lot of new infrastructure, rather it is about improving the existing public spaces and existing connectivity. Sequence 2 will involve an entirely new body of work that crosses the interstate, connect the downtown with Wilburton, and interface with the Eastside Rail Corridor. The first step in the visioning process involved defining the route. Equally important has been defining the overarching identity of the Grand Connection, which has involved cohesive design strategies with a consistent design aesthetic running throughout the route, and identifying key nodes and locations for public space improvements, including Downtown Park, Compass Plaza, the I-405 crossing and the Bellevue Transit Center.

Mr. Calvert said the distance from the Eastside Rail Corridor to Meydenbauer Bay is 1.47 miles. The pedestrian route is intended to serve as the main spine for the Grand Connection. The route between Bellevue Way and the Eastside Rail Corridor is pretty much established, but there have been questions about the best route to get down to Meydenbauer Bay through Downtown Park and Old Bellevue. The focus is on south along Bellevue Way to Downtown

Park, through the park by going around the circle, exiting the park on 102nd Avenue NE and continuing south to Main Street, then west to 100th Avenue SE and curving around to Bellevue Place. Immediate improvements could be made along that route that utilize the theme elements to claim the corridor. An alternative route is envisioned to accommodate cyclists and alternative transportation options. It runs south from NE 6th Street on 106th Avenue NE to NE 2nd Street where it continues westward around the southeast edge of Downtown Park and connects with 102nd Avenue NE, goes south to Main Street, west to 101st Avenue SE, then south to Meydenbauer Way SE. For the long term, the idea is to expand the overall route to create a loop that ties in all of Bellevue's green spaces in the immediate areas of the downtown and Wilburton utilizing Main Street.

Mr. Calvert said the consultant developed three recommendations in regard to the issue of identity. One focused on the natural landscape and played off the concept of Bellevue as a city in a park. It anticipated enhancing vegetation and incorporating more sustainable infrastructure. The second was more playful and whimsical and focused on play for all ages. The third option focused on Bellevue's history, both the past and the history that is being made. When the three options were put out to the public to weigh in on, 54 percent voted for the natural landscape option. That does not mean, however, that the three options are mutually exclusive in that there are opportunities to choose elements of each and incorporate them into key strategic locations.

The cohesive design strategies intended to support the overall identity include weather protection, paving elements, landscaping, sustainable infrastructure and opportunities for art and culture. Three paving options are currently on the project website for public comment. A lot of public outreach has been done as part of the project, including a design charrette and interviews with some 120 people, and the thing heard the most was the need to make the route usable in all weather conditions. Weather protection is needed to create a space that can be used year round. The concepts considered include linear installations as well as singular installations. Raised intersections along the Grand Connection are also considered to be cohesive design strategies. One has already been completed, one is in design, and several are being planned, and the thinking is that they should be made a feature throughout the entire route.

SuttenBeresCuller, a local collective of artists, was brought in to serve as a subconsultant focused on developing an art and culture plan for the entire route. One goal of the project is to raise the prominence of art and culture along the route and the team has crafted a plan that encourages new concepts that support local economies and that create whimsy and discovery. The concepts that have been floated include exhibiting the performance and sustainability measures the city has, and art installations that speak to the natural environment.

Mobility and connectivity are obviously very important elements. One thing that has been recommended is embracing technology given Bellevue's high-tech economy. The downtown area has challenging topography which can be problematic for both the younger and older populations. One thing the consultant team looked at is the use of autonomous shuttles that move at approximately the same speed cyclists. Rather than investing in a lot more infrastructure, all that would be needed are improved bike lanes. The vehicles would have the ability to detect cyclists and adapt accordingly for safety purposes. Residents near Meydenbauer Bay would be able to take an autonomous vehicle to the downtown or to the medical district without using their cars. Autonomous vehicles are in use in European campus settings, and Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Las Vegas have also started using them.

Mr. Calvert said improving public spaces is a major feature of the project. Compass Plaza at

the geographic center of the downtown is currently broken up. There are multiple routes through the plaza that seek to accommodate all users, and the result is pockets of public space that are too small to be programmed and too large to be intimate. The consultants have looked at options to open up the space to make it more flexible and accommodating of the food trucks and the farmers market. A design is being worked on to raise the intersection. The concept is to make Compass Plaza a much more substantial public space and the de facto center of gravity in the downtown. As envisioned, the flow will be consolidated into combined ramp and stairway, allowing everyone to move through the space seamlessly. The stairs double as amphitheater seating, and a water feature in the space could also double as an ice skating rink. Expanding the plaza as desired would accommodate the incorporation of green areas, park space, a pavilion showcasing local technologies, and things like that.

Mr. Calvert said there have been talks with various stakeholders, including Paccar, and their initial responses have been generally positive. Paccar attended the design charrette that kicked off the process, and they have continued to be engaged at some level. There currently are no development plans in place for their properties but there could be at any time, which makes it even more important to have a vision in place ahead of time.

Commissioner Marciante asked what a stakeholder like Paccar would need to be offered to redevelop the space as desired. Mr. Calvert said through the amenity incentive program, property owners can gain height and density by contributing land and developing a share of the infrastructure envisioned for the corridor.

Mr. Calvert said all of the work done to date has been consolidated into the draft framework plan, which is available on the project website. The document is broken down into individual chapters. Comments can be submitted about the document. The art and culture appendix is set to be released in about a week. It will address signage and wayfinding as well as gateway options. The document will be open for public comment through the end of the summer, and presentations are being made to the city's boards and commissions as well as stakeholders such as the Bellevue Downtown Association and the Chamber of Commerce. The comments will then be consolidated and the document will be refined as necessary.

Mr. Calvert said the I-405 crossing is the second body of work. The main goals are to create a safe and comfortable connection; provide opportunities for public space; integration with future development opportunities; interface with the Eastside Rail Corridor and 116th Avenue NE; and to create a landmark signature infrastructure for Bellevue. The crossing will be addressed in a second phase of work and through a separate report that will come out in the fall and which will be incorporated as part of the Wilburton commercial area environmental impact statement process.

There are three alternatives under consideration. The first alternative looks at the creation of a sculptural bridge that pursues new opportunities in construction technology utilizing cross-laminated timber (CLT) construction to provide a unique form. The method is highly sustainable. As envisioned, the bridge would be located generally to the south of the light rail alignment, though it would have to pass under it as it comes off of NE 6th Street before coming out into its own space and landing via a grand descent into a public space on the city owned Lincoln Center property, which would become a park space. The alternative provides opportunities for viewing platforms and landscaped green spaces. The sculptural structure would incorporate lighting that would provide for safety and visual interest at night.

Commissioner Lampe said it appeared to him that the topography will present some

challenges. He noted that 120th Avenue NE is quite a bit higher than 116th Avenue NE and the Eastside Rail Corridor, and then crossing over the freeway would require going back up again. Mr. Calvert pointed out that the elevations of NE 6th Street as it crosses I-405 and the Eastside Rail Corridor are the same. As envisioned, there would be a grand staircase dropping down, but the rest continues straight on to the Eastside Rail Corridor. The design maintains all grades for accessibility. There is also an elevated structure crossing 116th Avenue NE to connect with the Wilburton area, and the recommendation includes daylighting the creek that runs close to the freeway and turning it into an asset for the potential park.

Mr. Calvert said the second alternative is far more utilitarian in design. It is focused on a narrow efficient structure with berms to screen the impacts of the interstate. The design can easily be integrated into the new buildings. It would be similar to the crossing of Elliot Avenue in Seattle to access the Sculpture Park. It would ramp down into a smaller more modest green space and would also continue elevated to the Eastside Rail Corridor. While it looks simple, the design does include opportunities for public spaces, including a gateway plaza on the east side. The railing itself could include artistic elements.

The third alternative envisions covering as much as possible of the interstate between NE 4th Street and NE 6th Street. Consideration was given to also covering the ramps to the degree possible, but it was determined that the barrel vaults would pinch to the degree that there would no longer be access from NE 4th Street. Utilizing a barrel vault with a unique form to accommodate a rolling landscape would require the top of the vault to be 28 or 30 feet higher than the plaza. The current design, however, has the highest point at 12 feet higher than the plaza and creates much more usable space and much greater access. The primary benefit would be the creation of a park/green space for the Wilburton commercial area. The fact is Wilburton Park is not easily accessible from most of the study area, and turning the commercial area into a dense urban neighborhood will mean additional green space will be needed somewhere.

Commissioner Chirls asked about the timeframe of bringing the vision to life. Mr. Calvert said it could be done much quicker than most people think. Looking for a single source point to fund it all, however, is probably not reasonable. It is usually funding considerations that slow down such projects.

Mr. Calvert said the environmental impact statement will be released in early 2018. The evaluation will be shared with the Council, and the Council will determine which alternative should be selected. Once that is done, the work will shift to refining the design with the goal of having a grant-ready project.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the project would be a fit for park levy funds. Mr. Calvert said he did not believe it would. Commissioner Lampe pointed out that the park levy funds have all been earmarked to specific projects.

Mr. Calvert said WSDOT attended the ULI event and the engineering team spoke with them early on seeking to identify any fatal flaws. The intent is to re-engage with WSDOT now that there is something more than a loose pencil sketch in hand.

Commissioner Marciante asked what consideration has been given to where autonomous vehicles would queue up on the Grand Connection. Mr. Calvert said it is very early in the planning process and more investigation needs to be done. For one thing, work needs to be done to determine if the route is even appropriate for autonomous vehicles. Broadly speaking, there are opportunities on the route for drop-offs and pick-ups, especially near the transit

center. Autonomous vehicles can also operate like buses with fixed stops.

Commissioner Teh asked what is being done to plan for public parking. He noted that Millennium Park in Chicago has underground parking incorporated into the design. Mr. Calvert said parking has not been a consideration for the Grand Connection portion given its focus on improving existing places rather than creating a whole new park. However, underground parking could certainly be made part of a new facility on the east side of the freeway. The Wilburton commercial area will have parking, possibly associated with the Eastside Rail Corridor.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the location of the Washington State Convention Center over I-5 in Seattle is problematic in that it serves as a block to ever expanding the freeway in that location. He stressed the need to avoid inadvertently creating a similar block for I-405 through Bellevue. Mr. Calvert agreed and pointed out that the concepts are not cooked yet and as such remain flexible.

Commissioner Bishop asked how the NE 6th Street extension to the Eastside Rail Corridor and 120th Avenue NE fit into the overall plan. Mr. Calvert said the Grand Connection itself will not impact that project. The Wilburton CAC has on its plate a discussion of whether the extension should connect with 116th Avenue NE or 120th Avenue NE, but either way the Grand Connection accommodates for NE 6th Street coming through in some capacity.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

11. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Bishop said he watched the July 11 Bothell city council meeting at which WSDOT made a presentation on the results of having put in a hard shoulder running lane between Canyon Park and I-5 on I-405 that is operational during the evening peak period. It was stated that before putting in the shoulder lane, congestion was heavy, particularly north of SR-522 but also through Kirkland in the 160th Avenue area and particularly between SR-522 and SR-167 where the freeway narrows to three lanes. By putting 1.8 miles of hard shoulder running on the right side of the freeway between Canyon Park and I-5 at a cost of \$9.5 million, the congested areas went from red to green. WSDOT was surprised at how much the traffic flow changed between 85th Avenue and SR-522. The project is a classic example of what adding capacity to a system can do. The effect may be short term only, but it has created a lot of relief at a very low cost. The \$9.5 million came from excess toll revenues.

Commissioner Bishop reported that earlier in the day he had driven over to Ellensburg to attend a meeting of the Washington State Good Roads Association. The speaker was the new executive director of the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), a statewide agency that receives gas tax money and allocates it to cities for road projects. The organization established the criteria that says any city wanting to get a Complete Streets grant must have a Complete Streets ordinance. Bellevue adopted its ordinance and as a result received a half million dollar grant from the TIB to address the intersection at NE 6th Street and 106th Avenue NE.

Mr. McDonald said cities that have proven track records of efficiently using TIB allocations

for effective projects are more likely to receive additional TIB funds.

12. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald called attention to a memo in the Commission packets from Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram concerning the status of the transportation management program. He reminded the Commissioners that the online open house would go live on July 14. He said the Commission needed to set a public hearing date to receive comment on the recommendation the Commission will be receiving on September 14. He proposed setting the hearing for September 28.

A motion to set September 28 as the public hearing date for the Transportation Management Program code modifications was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

13. CALENDAR

The Commission reviewed the calendar of upcoming agenda items. Mr. McDonald reminded the Commissioners that the Commission's annual retreat was slated for July 27 at the Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center beginning at 5:30 p.m. He also noted that there would be no Commission meetings during the month of August.

14. ADJOURN

Commissioner Bishop adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.